



# Smokefree ZONE

Newsletter of the Rhode Island Department of Health Tobacco Control Program • November 2003

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## Welcome to the Smokefree Zone

Welcome to the first issue of the Smokefree Zone, the Rhode Island Department of Health Tobacco Prevention and Control newsletter. We plan to feature your news, local tobacco prevention and control programs and activities, as well as articles from around the country and the world to keep you linked to tobacco prevention activities and provide ideas to kick-start your programs.

All submissions to the newsletter are welcome. If you've got activities planned, please let us know. Send in your photos, awards you've received

or any information you think should be shared with other programs.

Please submit your information to Margaret Thomas at [met.marketing@verizon.net](mailto:met.marketing@verizon.net) or by calling Margaret at 438-8866 or faxing to her at 438-3026. Newsletter submissions can be sent at any time and will get into the next newsletter. The deadline for the following month is the 15th of the previous month.



**Physicians to  
Promote  
1-800-Try-To-Stop**



Soon Rhode Island physicians will be promoting 1-800-Try-To-Stop. In a joint project with the Rhode Island Department of Health and the Clarendon Group (who are providing spokesperson training), several RI doctors will appear in television and outdoor advertising to promote quitting. The television ads are scheduled to begin running in January.

## Newspaper in Education Project

In November, the Rhode Island Department of Health, Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Rhode Island and The Providence Journal teamed up to provide a special newspaper section to all of the middle schools in Rhode Island. DOH was responsible for the content, Blue Cross provided the sponsorship, and the Providence Journal designed, printed and distributed the section.

Newspapers in Education is a nationwide project where newspaper sections are specially created and designed to be used in schools as teaching tools.

They come with a teacher's curriculum guide.

Extra copies of this special section may be requested by calling Carol Hall-Walker at RIDOH at 222-2589.



## Who is Calling 1-800-Try-To-Stop?

We're glad you asked! Last year, almost 1,500 Rhode Islanders called 1-800-Try-To-Stop to get help to quit smoking. Of those who called the program, 45% of them said they learned about the program from an ad on television. The second most prevalent reason for calling was that they saw a billboard or other outdoor advertisement.

Most of our callers are women (66%) and the average age of all callers is 43 years old. As you might

guess, the highest volume of calls comes during the month of January, when everyone has good intentions for the new year and we are in full swing with the media campaign.

This year, the Department of Health is striving to spread out the advertising from November through May to, hopefully, keep the call volume steady through the Fall and into the Winter and Spring.

## Campaign Working for a Healthy Rhode Island

The Campaign for a Healthy Rhode Island is a statewide coalition of businesses, health organizations, and community groups working to protect the health of all Rhode Islanders. Through public policy advocacy and grassroots organizing, the Campaign works to address disparities in health by increasing access to quality affordable health care and by reducing the damaging effects of tobacco.

One of the Campaign's goals is to eliminate smoking in all workplaces, including restaurants and bars. Last year, Rhode Island came closer than ever to that goal. The Senate passed the Workplace Safety Act, and the bill gained considerable support in the House. CHRI is working to build on the momentum and pass a law that will protect workers from the dangers of second-hand smoke this year.

If you want to help, go to [www.smokefreeri.org](http://www.smokefreeri.org). The website includes facts about secondhand smoke and ways to get involved. Also, organizations and individuals can endorse the smokefree workplace campaign through the website, which will show decision-makers the broad grassroots support around this issue.



## CDC Reiterates its Strategic Goals

At a recent CDC conference in Atlanta, Jeffrey McKenna, MS, Director of the Office on Smoking and Health, reinforced the CDC's continuing goals in tobacco prevention and control.

The ongoing goals are:

1. Prevent initiation among youth and young adults
2. Promote cessation among adults and youth
3. Eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke
4. Identify and eliminate disparities in tobacco control
5. Conduct tobacco product research and information dissemination
6. Promote comprehensive global tobacco control
7. Sustain state programs

McKenna identified three major threats to further progress. The first is the magnitude of tobacco company marketing. At an estimated \$11.2 billion, the tobacco companies are a goliath marketing empire. Smoking in the movies is seen as another threat and CDC estimates that 52% of youth who initiate smoking do so because of the influence of the movies.

Smoking among young adults (18-24) is seen as the third factor that threatens progress in tobacco control.

As far as the best hopes for tobacco control, sustainable state programs have shown the best results and they are an issue that the CDC and the states must continue to make a priority.

## Does Rhode Island Know About 1-800-Try-To-Stop?

In a recent random sample survey of 1,466 adults in Rhode Island, conducted under the Tobacco Control Enhancement Project at URI, 75% of them said they

had heard, read or seen any anti-smoking information during the past 12 months. Great news, advocates! We're getting the word out in one form or another.

Of those who said they had heard, read or seen anti-smoking information, 67% said they saw something on television, 25% cited radio, 41% cited newspapers or magazines and 37% said they saw billboards.

In the coming months, we'll be promoting 1-800-Try-To-Stop and hope to persuade smokers to pick up the phone and call for help to quit smoking.

## **Program Focus**

# **Baby & Me Helps Moms Go Smokefree**



Baby & Me is a smoking cessation program providing individualized counseling and education to pregnant and postpartum women who want to quit smoking. The best part is that participants can have any form of health insurance or none at all.

Baby & Me has already had a number of women who have been successful in quitting smoking during pregnancy. Some of these women have remained tobacco free three and six months after delivery. The inability to use Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) during pregnancy makes it that much more difficult for these women to quit, yet when someone is motivated and has access to education and support, they can be successful in their quit attempt.

Cessation services are offered either in person or by telephone depending upon what works best for the participant. Length of program also varies depending upon the needs of the smoker.

Any pregnant women or new mother can participate at any of the following health care sites:

- > Thundermist Health Center of Woonsocket
- > Fox Point Health Center, Providence
- > Capitol Hill Health Center, Providence
- > Blackstone Valley Community Health Center, Pawtucket
- > Blackstone Valley Community Health Center, Central Falls
- > St. Joseph's Hospital, Providence

For more information on Baby & Me, call Rosemary O'Brien at 401/459-6037.

# **Smoke *free* Signals**

## **National Conference**

If you haven't registered yet for the National Conference on Tobacco or Health, please go to [www.tobaccocontrolconference.org](http://www.tobaccocontrolconference.org) for the latest information and to register. The conference is being held in Boston this year from December 10 – 12 at the Boston Marriott Copley Place and the Sheraton Boston. It's important to network with your peers from across the country, attend informative sessions and come back with information you can put to use in your programs. Don't delay. Register today.

## **Smoking and Breast Cancer**

A new finding presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology found that women who smoke are two and a half times more likely to die from breast cancer than women who don't smoke.

## **Ireland Going Smokefree**

Not to be outdone by the United States, Ireland officially goes smokefree on January 25, 2004. The smokefree workplace legislation includes Ireland's more than 10,000 pubs. Health Minister Michael Martin said, "the primary purpose in introducing this important new health measure is to allow people to work and socialize in clean, healthy, smokefree environments." The law covers any enclosed workplace, including pubs, clubs, trains, airplanes, buses and taxis.

## **Massachusetts Goes Smokefree**

In October, the House provided a veto-proof blessing to the statewide smoking ban, and the Senate followed suit on November 19, 2003 after three days of debate, voting 29 to 10. Minor differences between the two bills will have to be worked out, but this action ensures that the ban will become the law of the Commonwealth starting July 5, 2004, with violators facing fines as high as \$300. Massachusetts will become the nation's sixth smokefree state, joining California, Delaware, New York, Connecticut and Maine. Come on Little Rhody!

## **Restaurant and bar business going strong in New York**

Despite the gloom and doom predictions of the tobacco industry, from March through June, 10,000 new restaurant and bar jobs were created in New York City (NY Dept. of Labor). Alcohol and beer tax collections went up statewide (Dept. of Taxation). Tell the tobacco industry to smoke that! We can protect workers and customers and still make money.

## **Local Tobacco Control Advocate Hits the Celluloid**

Baha Sadr, tobacco program coordinator at the International Institute is also Rhode Island's latest filmmaker du jour. Baha created a short documentary, called Smoke Screens, featuring interviews with restaurant owners, patrons and staff of smoke-free restaurants in the Providence area. His film was screened at the Columbus Theatre during a local film festival. Baha has also created a puppet show that is performed in local schools.



## West Warwick Student Takes on Secondhand Smoke

West Warwick ninth-grader Olga Goretoy is the artist of this year's anti-tobacco billboard.

She was recognized by town and state leaders for her billboard design which recognizes the dangers of secondhand smoke. Goretoy's ad went up this week on the billboard at Factory and Providence streets after she was announced the winner of a contest last year for the best anti-tobacco billboard message.

Kimberly Maine, coordinator for the middle school's tobacco prevention and cessation program, said Goretoy's artwork won because of its strong message about how deadly secondhand smoke is. Maine also said she thinks the simple design will stand out to drivers passing by.

Goretoy was congratulated by officials, including Donna Levesque, Tobacco Control Coordinator with the R.I. Department of Health, during a brief gathering by the billboard. School Committee members attended as well as town councilmen and officials from the school department.

Donna Levesque congratulated the West Warwick School System for being a leader in tobacco prevention and cessation within the state. She highlighted many of the programs offered by J.F. Deering Middle School, including guest speakers from across the nation and cessation programs for students and adults.

For winning the contest, Goretoy received a \$100 savings bond from the school anti-tobacco program, Project Stop.

Goretoy's billboard will remain at its current location for one month. Maine said, it will also be displayed on four other billboards throughout the town.

She said the billboard may be particularly important for the West Warwick Community because exposure to secondhand smoke dramatically increases the risk for tobacco-related illness. A Project Stop survey found that over 50 percent of middle school students reported that their parents smoked.

West Warwick is one of just three school districts participating in a comprehensive school project aimed at decreasing tobacco use among students. According to Maine, the school received a four year grant that ended last June. This billboard is the last event planned. The school has also worked closely with the West Warwick Substance Abuse Prevention Task Force in coordinating programs that work to educate youth on smoking.



*Olga Goretoy, right, of West Warwick shows off her winning design, as Kimberly Maine, J.F. Deering Middle School Tobacco Prevention and cessation program, Coordinator applauds her effort. Below is the billboard as it appears.*



## Looking Glass Theatre Program Generates Thousands of Letters

Diane Postoian at Looking Glass Theatre has created "Ask Olga," a fifty minute, one-woman, media literacy performance for sixth graders. It focuses on the effect of media hype on young minds. Before Diane agrees to perform her show, the school must agree to participate in a post-show project where the students write letters to the film industry to

encourage them to make appropriate films, without smoking and other objectionable items, for young people. Last year, 1,700 letters were generated as a result of "Ask Olga." You can request a performance by calling Pat at Looking Glass Theatre at 331-9080.

### Smokeyfree Zone Credits

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